



COVID-19 SEPARATION UNIT

TELS.net

This template is designed to provide industry best practices as regulatory guidelines are not yet available related to the planning, development and staffing of Separation Units within a Senior Living community.

Ideally, a Senior Care facility would be able to create an Isolation Unit on-site, but the ability to create the negative air pressure required of an Isolation Unit may present itself a challenge due to your existing HVAC systems. Therefore, TELS has adopted the term Separation Units to help take pressure off your staff and improve your ability to create a space that works best for you.

Per CMS guidelines (4/2/2020): <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/4220-covid-19-long-term-care-facility-guidance.pdf>

To avoid transmission within long-term care facilities, facilities should use separate staffing teams for COVID-19-positive residents to the best of their ability, and work with State and local leaders to designate separate facilities or units within a facility to separate COVID-19-negative residents from COVID-19-positive residents and individuals with unknown COVID-19 status.

- Long-term care facilities should exercise as best as possible consistent assignment (meaning the assignment of staff to certain patients and residents) for all patients and residents regardless of symptoms or COVID-19 status. This practice can enhance staff's familiarity with their assigned patients and residents, helping them detect emerging condition changes that unfamiliar staff may not notice. The goal is to decrease the number of different staff interacting with each patient and resident as well as the number of times those staff interact with the patient and resident. Also, staff as much as possible should not work across units or floors.
 - i. Long-term care facilities should redeploy existing training related to consistent assignment, and ensure staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Long-term care facilities should separate patients and residents who have COVID-19 from patients and residents who do not, or have an unknown status.
 - i. To this end, long-term care facilities should work with State and local community leaders to identify and designate facilities dedicated to patients and residents with known COVID-19 positive and those with suspected COVID-19, ensuring they are separate from patients and residents who are COVID-19 negative;
 - ii. COVID-19-positive units and facilities must be capable of maintaining strict infection control practices and testing protocols, as required by regulation;
 - 1. When possible, facilities should exercise consistent assignment, or have separate staffing teams for COVID-19-positive and COVID-19-negative patients.
 - iii. There may be a need for some of these COVID-19-positive long-term care facilities to have the capacity, staffing, and infrastructure to manage higher intensity patients, including ventilator management;
 - iv. State agencies including health departments, hospitals, and nursing home associations will have to ensure coordination among facilities to determine which facilities will have a designation and to provide adequate staff supplies and PPE; and, if possible, isolate all admitted residents (including readmissions) in their room in the COVID-19-positive facility for 14 days if their COVID-19 status is unknown; and
 - v. Long-term care facilities should, to the fullest extent possible, inform residents and their families of limitations of their access to and ability to leave and re-enter the facility, as well as any requirements and procedures for placement in alternative facilities for COVID-19-positive or unknown status.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Planning – Consider the layout of your facility to identify a space that provides containment and is flexible to best respond to the needs of your resident population.

2. Staffing – Consider how to separate and dedicate staff supporting COVID-19-positive residents within a Separation Unit.

3. Resident Care Equipment – Consider the equipment counts required by your residents and dedicate individual pieces to dwell within your Separation Unit in order to limit the amount of staff and equipment entering or exiting.

Note: Included within the instructions are links to DirectSupply.net. The intention of including is not to encourage unnecessary spending, but provide quick, direct access to required equipment, if needed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Direct Supply is monitoring stocking and inventory across our supplier network. Upon notification of low or no inventory, that specific SKU will be removed from DirectSupply.net.

4. Create a Barrier for Your Designated Interior Entrance – Find best practice guidance from other Senior Living providers on the materials and installation of a barrier to limit exposure and transmission.

1. Planning

- Review floor plans to identify sets of rooms that would work best.
 - The administrator along with other staff such as maintenance and nursing should review the facility layout to identify a set of rooms that may work best for the Separation Unit.
 - Consider common spaces as an alternative to units or wings as that larger space may provide greater flexibility and avoid constant resizing and enlargement of the Separation Unit.

- Identify a section where the entire corridor span can be covered to restrict access and reduce risk of transmission.
 - The design allows for the restriction of access to reduce the risk of transmission and maximize resources such as PPE.

- Target sets of rooms at the end of a corridor or a wing with a direct exit to the outside.

- Target sets of rooms with private baths (when available).
 - If not, consider the bathing needs of your resident population against the availability of communal bathing within your Separation Unit.

- Identify a singular direct exit to the exterior (if possible) to be used for trash and laundry removal.
 - Consider additional signage for the exterior of the door (e.g., Exit Only, No Entrance Permitted).
 - Consider using an outside laundry service for the Separation Unit if there isn't a clean pathway to laundry equipment.

- Ideally, your "vestibule" includes one or two private rooms for staff changing/personal needs, linen and equipment storage, and hanging and drying of PPE as well as:
 - Table/cart for supplies
 - 60% or greater alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Masks, clothing protectors, eye protection and gloves of multiple sizes
 - Shoe covers and surgical caps, if available
 - Log for signing into the COVID-19-designated area with pen
 - Antiviral wipes
 - Sign with reminders of proper PPE donning

- Verify the nurse call system within the Separation Unit is sufficient and functional for residents to use.
 - Check with your current nurse call system to determine any additional functionality that might be available during an emergency. If an area in use is not outfitted with a nurse call system, consider other means, such as handbells or two-way radios (walkie-talkie).

- Verify there are an adequate number of smoke detectors and placement of the sprinkler heads regarding the placement of your barrier and/or vestibule.

- Define policies for deliveries (food, mail, linens, etc.) and removal (trash and laundry).
 - Consider additional signage and/or training to support communication of new policies.

- Consider dedicating a secured wing or full building to accommodate needs or Memory Care.
 - Dedicate a full wing or building as the Separation Unit, allowing walls and fire doors to act as the second barrier.
 - Identify a space that is outside of that wing but still close that can be used as the vestibule and position the initial barrier wall outside of that space (for instance, a dining room space or lobby leading into the building).
 - Define a clear, consistent message from staff to residents to best communicate on what is happening and why that takes into account the unique needs of this resident population.

2. Staffing

- Identify the initial and potential worst-case scenario regarding the amount of staff dedicated to this Separation Unit.

- Identify individual staff members to dedicate to the Separation Unit.
 - Once complete, limit staff exposure to clinical and a housekeeper, if possible.
 - Strong considerations should be made toward an individual's commitment to PPE and handwashing.

- Train staff on the proper use of PPE and handwashing.
 - Conduct extensive training on the use of PPE expected to be donned when on the unit. This is the minimum expected by CMS.
 - For a resident with known or suspected COVID-19: staff wear gloves, gown, eye protection and an N95 or higher-level respirator, if available. A face mask is an acceptable alternative if a respirator is not available. Additionally, if there are COVID-19 cases in the facility or sustained community transmission, staff implement universal use of face masks while in the facility (based on availability). When COVID-19 is identified in the facility, staff wear all recommended PPE (i.e., gloves, gown, eye protection and respirator or face mask) for the care of all residents on the unit (or facility-wide based on the location of affected residents), regardless of symptoms (based on availability).

- Train staff on new evacuation routes and protocols regarding the Separation Unit.

- Minimize any and all staff working across units.
 - Reduce exposure and conserve PPE.

- Limit the number of different staff going into each resident's room and increase efficiency of tasks when entering a resident's room to reduce the number of entries.
 - Look for ways to bundle care and other activities that need to be done when entering the room.
 - For example, a CNA may want to perform house-cleaning activities or remove trash or laundry upon entry, in addition to ADL care.

- If possible, transfer non-positive residents requiring therapy or rehab to non-positive corridors/wings.
 - Depending on census, you may not be able to empty your Separation Unit upon implementation.
 - Consider any therapy or rehab required of a non-positive resident in the decision of whether they remain on that wing or transfer to another area of the building.

- Limit activities/wellness to “window sessions” and utilize technology to sustain engagement.
 - In advance of completing, increase the amount of activities supplies dedicated or technology (TV/Wi-Fi) available within the wing.
 - Consider adding room number signs to the exterior of your building (near windows) to make "window sessions" easier.

- Communicate on revised policies across your staff, families and resident population.

3. Resident Care Equipment

- Dedicate or obtain med carts and treatment carts to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Punch Card Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-med-mgmt-carts-charting-medical-carts-punch-card-carts-33976>
 - Emergency Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-med-mgmt-carts-charting-medical-carts-emergency-code-response-carts-33967>
 - Isolation Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-med-mgmt-carts-charting-medical-carts-isolation-carts-33991>
 - All Med Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-med-mgmt-carts-charting-medical-carts-33934>

- Dedicate or obtain clinical care devices to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Scales: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-scales-33830>
 - Vital Signs: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-vital-signs-33818>
 - Respiratory: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-clinical-respiratory-4427>

- Dedicate or obtain lifts and transfer equipment to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Slings: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-equipment-lifts-transfer-lifts-accessories-lift-slings-20327>
 - Floor Lifts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-equipment-lifts-transfer-lifts-floor-lifts-20843>
 - Sit-to-Stand Lifts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-equipment-lifts-transfer-lifts-stand-aids-21104>
 - All Lift & Transfer: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-equipment-lifts-transfer-203>

- Dedicate or obtain laundry distribution equipment to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Hampers: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/environmental-laundry-hampers-20292>
 - Laundry Bags: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/environmental-laundry-laundry-bags-20622>
 - Collection Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/environmental-laundry-carts-collection-carts-20627>

- Dedicate or obtain additional linens or linen storage to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Textiles: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/textiles-12021>
 - Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/environmental-laundry-carts-linen-carts-20207>

- Dedicate or obtain housekeeping carts and supplies to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Housekeeping Carts: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?t=housekeeping+cart>
 - Microfiber & Mops: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?t=mops>
 - Mop Buckets: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?c1=6351&t=Mop%20Buckets>
 - Trash Cans: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?t=trash+cans>
 - Trash Bags: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?t=can+liners>
 - Janitorial & Sanitation Supplies: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/environmental-janitorial-supplies-6363>
 - All Housekeeping: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/environmental-housekeeping-6356>

- Consider additional dedicated bathing and toileting items to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Bath & Shower: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?c1=196&t=shower>
 - Toileting : <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?c1=196&c2=206&t=toileting>
 - Bathing & Toileting ADLs: <https://store.directsupply.com/Search?t=toileting+aids>
 - All Bathing: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/healthcare-equipment-bathing-206>

- Consider additional dedicated therapy items to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - ADLs: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/rehabilitation-adl-aids-23300>
 - Mobility: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/rehabilitation-wheelchairs-mobility-23117>
 - Exercise: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/rehabilitation-exercise-supplies-23320>

- Consider additional activities and entertainment technology to remain within the Separation Unit.
 - Wellness: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/rehabilitation-wellness-130576>
 - Electronics: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/technology-electronics-electronics-20259>
 - Portable Audio: <https://store.directsupply.com/catalog/technology-electronics-portable-audio-199232>

- Consider additional walkie-talkies to maintain communication and limit staff entrance to the Separation Unit.

4. Create a Barrier for Your Designated Interior Entrance

- Move all dedicated resident care equipment into the Separation Unit.

- Complete all required maintenance or repairs within the Separation Unit.
 - Consider any last-minute entertainment repairs (broken TVs) or updates (Wi-Fi).
 - Ensure all in-unit HVAC is operating properly (perform start-up on air conditioning, if possible).

- Stage your dedicated carts, meal delivery, laundry hampers and distribution, lifts, and clinical care.

- Increase hand sanitizer stations within the vestibule and corridor, if possible.

- Create a two-wall barrier system that provides a vestibule for staging and includes private room(s) for staff use.

- Consider a zippered visqueen, a zipwall or durable plastic sheeting (5 mm thick) wall as a quick option if other temporary or permanent solutions aren't available in the time or budget required.
 - Ensure your barrier covers the corridor width completely.
 - Use bricks, weights or two-by-fours on the floor and secure tightly to walls and ceilings to limit movement and increase stability.
 - Zipping up makes the opening smaller but is easier to operate and improves stability on the floor.
 - Consider installing two zippers 48" apart to unzip both to pass through large carts, if necessary.

- Materials needed multiplied by 2 for both walls
 - Adequate number and length of two-by-fours
 - Adequate number and length of two-by-twos
 - 2½" - 3" drywall screws
 - Staple gun and wood staples
 - Visqueen with width and length to ensure that it can cover the entire width and height of the corridor.
 - Visqueen sheeting used should be at least .05 mm thick
 - Duct tape
 - Two-by-six for footer
 - Two concrete blocks
 - Painters' zip to create the opening in the visqueen wall

CREATE A BARRIER FOR YOUR DESIGNATED INTERIOR ENTRANCE

- Designate a space within your private rooms (vestibule) for staff to hang/dry PPE when not in use.

- Stock the private rooms within the vestibule to limit traffic post-completion of your Separation Unit.
 - Store additional linens, resident care items, activities supplies, disposables and more for quick access.
 - Create a supply of PPE, water and snacks for staff.
 - Consider a bed or area of rest for staff for breaks.

- Ensure equipment and supplies are within the Separation Unit
 - Covered can for trash
 - Covered can for linen
 - Table/cart for supplies
 - Covered container for equipment that needs to be cleaned for reuse
 - Wipes for equipment and staff shoes
 - Disinfecting spray
 - 60% or greater alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Extra trash bags
 - Med/treatment cart OR tackle box with a lock
 - Vital signs monitor, if available
 - Crash cart, kept near the outside of the Separation Unit
 - Housekeeping cart with mop, broom and dustpan
 - Office supplies: pens, highlighters, paper
 - Clean linen cart
 - Clean supply area/cart
 - Cooler for ice and water
 - Clothesline and clothespins

Sign in to your account today at www.TELS.net for COVID-19-specific resources that can help you convert policy into action, heighten visibility and communication, or simply help with everyday building management.